



OPEN HEARTS & OPEN HOMES

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS WITH
THE GIFT OF HOSPITALITY



FESTIVE
IDEAS
INSIDE!

THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU!

Imagine a Christmas season where hundreds of folks in our neighborhoods experience the joy and welcome of Christmas because they know someone from NLCC. And that someone could be you!

What if this Christmas, rather than simply inviting our neighbours into our church buildings, we invite them into our homes? Let's take something we already enjoy and reach out to our community with it. Something simple. Something fun! And then believe that God's love can make a difference.

This booklet is filled with ideas to spark your imagination and to help you host a stress-free, successful event with some of your neighbours. Don't like hosting at home? No problem. There are options beyond the walls of your house too. Not sure how to do something on your own? Invite a friend to join you.

Imagine a Christmas where our NLCC family creates spaces that become beacons of light and joy in a weary world!



—  NLCC

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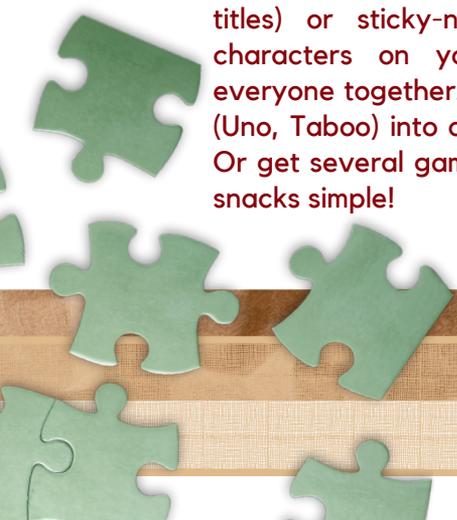
Any of the following options could easily be adapted for an adult event. But if you have kids, these will work great!

FAMILY GAMES NIGHT



Invite a family or two from your neighbourhood or from your kids' school and play games together. Your family likely already has some favourites that are perfect for the kids' ages. There are always "out-of-the-box" ideas like bringing mini-golf or corn-hole into the house!

Party games like charades (act out Christmas song titles) or sticky-notes (write popular Christmas characters on your foreheads or backs) get everyone together. Consider turning a simple game (Uno, Taboo) into a tournament with a grand prize. Or get several games going at once. And keep the snacks simple!



FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENTS

MOVIE NIGHT

All you need for a successful movie night is some popcorn and a screen! You could even toss extra blankets and pillows in the room and invite guests to arrive in pajamas for the ultimate cozy experience.

Choose from classics like:

- THE POLAR EXPRESS
- ELF
- THE SANTA CLAUS
- IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE
- HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS
- HOME ALONE 1 & 2
- WHITE CHRISTMAS
- MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET
- A CHRISTMAS CAROL
- FROSTY THE SNOWMAN
- CHARLIE BROWN'S CHRISTMAS

You could add a dress-up theme (other than pj's) or even consider a formal night" of black and white to go with a B&W movie.



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GINGERBREAD HOUSES & COOKIES

TIP: If you're
decorating cookies,
make sure there
are containers to
send them home in!

If you have a sweet tooth and you're up for the mess, this one is always a hit. You can simplify the house-building by buying ready-made kits. Choose an assortment of candies and frostings and other bits n' bobs, crank the Christmas tunes and let the fun begin! No other snack planning is necessary.



CHRISTMAS CRAFT

Every kid is an artist and who doesn't love the glitter of Christmas? Choose an ornament you can all make, or another small item that every guest can create to take home. This could be a great space to choose something that has a deeper story to it, like candy canes, Christmas trees, angels or stars.



A HAPPY APPY CHRISTMAS



Invite your guests for a relaxing evening together. You could choose to keep things simple by asking each guest to bring a favourite appetizer, while you provide the drinks. And, of course, any gathering around food is a win. You may prefer to host a chocolate fondue or a hot cocoa or coffee bar!



Here are a host of suggestions for hosting a group in your home. Use them as inspiration, mix them up and change anything you want to add your own style. And, of course, any of the following ideas can be adapted to include children. You know your guests!

ADULT EVENTS



WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE

This is always a lot of laughs. Decide on your parameters such as the cost of gift, a thrifted gift, a re-gift or a theme for the gifts.





DRESS-UP THEME PARTY

Ugly sweaters! A luau! A retro Christmas. PJ's. Formal wear. The options are endless. Consider including a playlist and menu that go with your theme. Maybe add a prize for the best costume!



ADULT EVENTS



FAVOURITE TRADITIONS

One way for all of you to get to know one another a little better is by telling stories. Invite each guest to bring along a favourite ornament and to explain what it means to them.

Move on to sharing favourite traditions and favourite memories. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to share what Christmas means to you too.

ADULT EVENTS

THINK OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

If hosting people in your home is not for you, you can still extend hospitality to your neighbour by inviting them to join you at some other venue. If you can, cover their cost as a Christmas gift from you. There are also free community events (William's Park lights, Potter's Christmas displays) that can be fun to enjoy together. Or, if serving and giving gifts is the way you like to love others, consider some of the following ideas!

HERE WE GO A-CAROLING

You don't need the voice of an angel to sing for others. All that's required is some cozy clothes, a 2 or 3 song repertoire and a few willing participants. Get your family or a few friends involved in singing around your neighbourhood. Or show up at the door of someone whom you know is going through a difficult time. And feel free to add the creative touch of a small gift.



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Prepare a few Christmas cards in advance (perhaps with an invitation to our Christmas Eve services included) and look for opportunities to put love into action. Rake someone's leaves. Clean up garbage and recycling bins. Shovel snow. Make someone's day. This is a great way to include your kids in loving their neighbours.



ELVES ON THE LOOSE

Surprise your neighbours with a small gift left at their front door. You could do some festive baking or wrap up small treasures that you've found at a local Christmas market. Add a Christmas card and consider including an invitation to our Christmas Eve services.

THINK OUTSIDE THE HOUSE



OUT & ABOUT

Reach out to a neighbour by inviting them to join you on an outing. Choose your budget. You could go see Christmas lights together, go ice-skating or hiking, take in a musical or go to the theatre together.



The venue isn't as significant as the simple invitation to spend time together!





THINK OUTSIDE THE MONTH

ÉPIPHANY

One last suggestion... We all know how full our December calendars get! But did you know that the 12th day of Christmas actually falls on January 6?

Epiphany, the celebration of the magi, is a Christmas holiday in many Hispanic and northern European cultures. So start a new tradition! Invite your neighbours to wrap up the Christmas season by relaxing together in January. Including a white elephant gift exchange would fit in perfectly here. And what an excellent opportunity to share the origin of gift-giving with the story of the wise men.





So, as Mother Teresa famously said, let's do small things with great love – the great love that came down at Christmas.

HAPPY PLANNING.
HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

–  NLCC



nlcc.ca/christmas